

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2744

INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

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C O N F I D E N T I A L KINSHASA 3061

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR MOPS CG AO

SUBJ: SHABA INVASION: MORE ON GOZ PRESS RELATIONS

REF: STATE 72021 (NOTAL)

1. FONMIN NGUZA AND I HAD ANOTHER LENGTHY DISCUSSION ON GOZ PRESS RELATIONS TODAY, APR 2, THIS TIME ON MY INITIATIVE. IN VARIOUS WAYS I MADE THE POINT THAT, WHILE GOZ OBVIOUSLY HAD THE RIGHT TO EXERCISE CONTROLS OVER PRESS ACTIVITY WITHIN ZAIRE DURING TIME OF NATIONAL EMERGENCY, I WANTED HIM AND PRES MOBUTU TO BE AWARE THAT THE GREATER THE CONTROLS OVER US JOURNALISTS, THE MORE LIKELY THEIR REPORTING WOULD BE ERRONEOUS OR NEGATIVE. THE LATTER WOULD CERTAINLY BE THE CASE IF THEY WERE SUBJECT TO RIGID CENSORSHIP, OR WORSE, EXPELLED FROM ZAIRE.

2. NGUZA CONFIRMED THAT THE PRES WAS DETERMINED FOR SECURITY REASONS TO EXERCISE CONTROLS OVER MEDIA AS MANY OTHER COUNTRIES HAD DONE DURING WARTIME. PRES KNEW THAT SUCH CONTROLS WERE UNDESIREABLE AND COULD HAVE NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES IN TERMS OF FOREIGN COVERAGE, BUT CONSIDERING DAMAGING EFFECTS OF COVERAGE TO DATE, PRES VIEWED CONTROLS AS LESSOR OF TWO EVILS. NGUZA DENIED GOZ WAS EFFECTIVELY

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CENSORING REPORTING BY FOREIGN JOURNALISTS HERE, BUT CONFIRMED GOZ HAD TAKEN STEPS TO PROHIBIT FOREIGN NEWS AGENCIES FROM ADDING TO THEIR STAFFS ALREADY IN THE COUNTRY. HE SAID PRINCIPAL CONTROL WOULD BE PREVENTING JOURNALISTS FROM GOING TO SHABA COMBAT ZONE (NOT PRECISELY DEFINED, BUT APPARENTLY INCLUDING AT LEAST KOLWEZI) UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE.

3. UPSHOT OF OUR CONVERSATION WAS NGUZA'S CONFIRMATION THAT GOZ:

(A) WOULD CONTROL NUMBERS OF FOREIGN JOURNALISTS ALLOWED IN
ZAIRE; (B) WOULD FOR TIME BEING PROHIBIT THEM FROM VISITING SHABA;
(C) WOULD NOT CENSOR THEIR REPORTING; AND (D) HAD NO PLANS TO
EXPEL ANY OF THEM.

4. WE'LL SEE WHAT HAPPENS AND KEEP DEPT INFORMED.

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Message Attributes

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